

**Testimony for Public Hearing
Human Services Committee
February 13, 2023**

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104 Whitney St., Hartford, CT 06105**

In support of HB 6616 Expanding access to HUSKY up to age 26 regardless of immigration status

Dear Members of the Human Services Committee of Connecticut General Assembly:

My name is Polly Moran; I have been a Nurse-Midwife for over 30 years in the Bristol and Hartford communities, both communities with sizable immigrant communities. I write in support of HB 6616: EXPANDING ACCESS TO HUSKY UP TO AGE 26 REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS. Healthcare is a right. The Affordable Care Act placed preventative health, strategies to improve health outcomes, and issues of equity and affordability front and center in our healthcare system. Yet, despite the reform, too often members of many communities in Connecticut have inadequate access to care across their life span and this has both a public health and economic impact. This is especially true for families living here who are undocumented. This year with the passage of SB 6616, the State of Connecticut would ensure that residents up to the age of 26 years old would have access to HUSKY.

Expanding access to HUSKY is an essential and needed step toward ensuring that Connecticut's immigrant community gets healthcare they need and deserve. Making healthcare more accessible is good for our economy. If Connecticut wants a future that includes healthy families and a stable, thriving and growing workforce that is ready to meet the needs of our future, Connecticut must ensure that these individuals have access to health coverage. Expanding access and lowering costs and healthcare debt incurred by our Connecticut residents strengthens our economy by keeping our workers and their families healthier and more productive. Expanding Husky would lower costs for everyone. When people without insurance cannot pay for their care, hospitals and insurance companies pass the cost along to the rest of us. This proposal ensures that more people would have affordable health insurance and would be able to get the medical treatment they need, which will bring down costs for everyone.

The entry point of care for reproductive health is during adolescence and early adulthood. Our undocumented patients have been unable to access timely preventive reproductive health care. Issues around contraception, STI prevention, identification, and treatment can not be addressed for our immigrant undocumented young adults. Along with patients in my office, their partners often are also left out of health delivery systems. This puts all of them at risk for unwanted pregnancies, preventative diseases, and negative health outcomes; this negatively impacts their future. Improving health care for all families in Connecticut means access to health care and health insurance. We need to ensure that the undocumented community has coverage for critical health services. Expanding that coverage in Connecticut is essential. In the long term, we need to ensure that all immigrants, including parents and adults, are able to have access to HUSKY and the healthcare they need. The state of Connecticut must create a long term plan to expand HUSKY access to our whole immigrant community.

I support HB 6616: Expanding access to HUSKY up to age 26 regardless of immigration status.

Thank you for your time,
Polly C. Moran, MSN, CNM